

Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. When can applicants expect grant agreements to be executed so they can begin work?

A: The State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) first goal is to award \$9.5 million from Proposition 50 in April 2005 because grant agreement for these funds must be executed by June 30, 2005. Depending on the number of proposals submitted, the SWRCB may award the remaining funds at the same time. If a large number of proposals are submitted by the November 10, 2004 deadline, the SWRCB may use multiple cycles to award the additional funds from Propositions 40 and 50. Grant agreements are expected approximately six months after the grant funds are awarded. Federal 319 funds will be awarded after the SWRCB receives the 319 grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA); grant agreements are expected approximately six months after the 319 grant funds are awarded.

2. When will grant funds be disbursed to applicants?

A: An applicant can request disbursement of grant funds after the grant agreement is executed. The expenses must be due and payable, but not necessarily paid, to be eligible for disbursement. Disbursement requests can be submitted as frequently as monthly. It will take about six weeks to receive a check after a request for disbursement is submitted.

3. Will funds be allocated to projects on a geographic basis?

A: There is no specific formula for distributing grant funds on a geographic basis. Projects will be reviewed and evaluated according to the criteria in Section VI.C of the Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program (AWQGP). The Project Selection Panel may consider geographic distribution of projects in developing the final recommended funding list.

4. Can Regional Water Quality Control Boards apply for funding?

A: No.

5. How is a "TMDL under development" defined? Will the definition be the same for Section 319 grants as for Propositions 40 and 50 grants?

A: "TMDL under development" is defined as a TMDL that the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is actively working on this fiscal year under agreement with USEPA. The definition is the same for all funding sources.

6. Is a Project Assessment and Evaluation Plan required for Project Planning Monitoring (PPM) projects?

A: No. PPM projects involve the collection of water quality data that must be used to develop a plan to implement appropriate management measures to address the

Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

identified water quality problems. Water Quality Monitoring plans for PPM projects are required in accordance with Section IV.F of the Program Guidelines.

7. Can details of a project be modified from what are presented in the application before a grant agreement is issued?

A: This is not recommended. Applications must be submitted in sufficient detail to develop the scope of work for the grant agreement. The Project Selection Panel members realize that in some cases it may be necessary to complete preliminary tasks to determine specific implementation measures or locations. However, applicants should bear in mind that readiness to proceed is a significant factor in ranking the projects. If a project is awarded funds, the applicant can submit revisions. Any revisions, though, must be consistent with the project purpose and scope of work outlined in the application. Revisions may also delay the issuance of a grant agreement.

8. One of the factors in determining readiness to proceed (Section IV.J of the Program Guidelines) is the status of “secured matching funds.” What is meant by “secured matching funds”?

A: “Secured matching funds” will be evaluated to determine the reliability of the commitment by the source of those funds to provide those funds for the project. The Project Selection Panel understands that at the time of application, some matching funds may be anticipated but not secured. Applicants should provide confirmation of all commitments to provide matching funds or the anticipated date(s) these funds will be secured and any additional requirements that must be satisfied to receive those funds.

9. Can the local matching funds be spent on project activities before a grant agreement is issued?

A: No. The grant funds and required matching funds apply to eligible costs of the project. Only work performed after the grant agreement is executed is eligible for reimbursement (Section VI.E of the Program Guidelines).

10. If the applicant is University of California, can state funds be used as a match for University of California funds?

A: Yes. The University of California is a state agency and can use state funds as a match (Section III.D of the Program Guidelines).

11. Can eligible matching funds be applied toward two different proposals or components of proposals, or is that “double dipping?” Can more than one proposal be submitted for eligible matching funds, but then have only one proposal be chosen?

Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

A: Yes. However, this is not recommended. Proposals are evaluated on the reliability of the commitment to provide matching funds. Dedicating matching funds to multiple projects may raise doubts about the reliability of those matching funds; the result could be that all the projects could be ranked lower than other projects with more secure matching funds. If the applicant doesn't have the matching funds available as stated in the application, they can always back out before executing the grant agreement.

12. Section IV.F (Project Effectiveness) is unclear with regard to the type of monitoring data required of implementation projects. The problematic paragraph is: "Implementation projects also must include a plan to document results including water quality improvements. A monitoring plan and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) with associated schedule and budget is required for all projects that include water quality monitoring. Impartial experts must assist in developing and implementing the plan and certifying the results." How would this be accomplished for a project that evaluates reduction of sediment and nutrient loss by using various field management practices?

A: The application must describe the method that will be used to evaluate the anticipated reduction. Impartial experts must assist in developing and implementing the plan and certifying the results. Methods may include water quality monitoring, photo monitoring, or modeling. Other methods might also be appropriate.

13. Does the requirement that "all water quality data generated must be compatible with the submittal requirements of the SWAMP program" (Page 4 of the Program Guidelines) apply to implementation projects? If so, what specific requirements/restrictions would that impose?

A: Yes, if the implementation project includes water quality monitoring. The results of all surface water samples must be compatible with SWAMP. The specific SWAMP data requirements can be found available at:
<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/swamp/index.html>.

14. Must the authorized representative signing on behalf of an applicant be employed by the public agency or non-profit organization applying for the grant?

A: No. However, the individual signing the grant agreement on behalf of the agency or organization must be legally authorized by the governing body of the agency or organization to sign the grant agreement.

15. Can a county agency represent a disadvantaged community in an unincorporated area.

A: Yes.

Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program
Frequently Asked Questions

16. Is a nonprofit corporation eligible for funding if it is qualified under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- A. No. Nonprofit organizations are eligible for funding if they are formed pursuant to the California Nonprofit Corporation Law, qualified to do business in California, and qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.